

That's Why

STORIES



Written by
RUTH O. DYER



Peggy Aushman.
Jan. 3, 1941

Guilford Springs

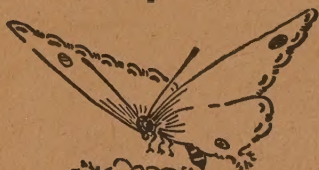


THAT'S WHY STORIES

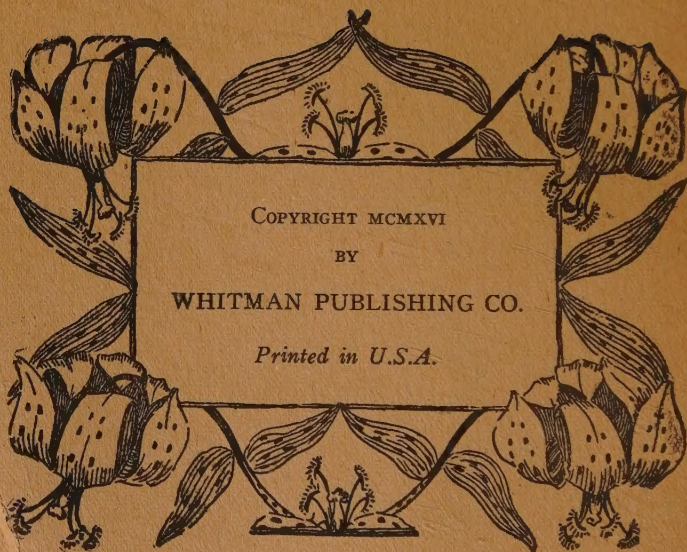
THAT'S WHY STORIES

BY
RUTH O. DYER

DECORATIONS
BY
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INTRODUCTION

THESE little fanciful tales are written for children who still find pleasure in "make believe," and like to think of fairies as little people of magical power who live just outside the range of sight, thus furnishing easy and delightful reasons for many natural occurrences that are strange to tender minds.

Children find a peculiar pleasure in "just letting the imagination run wild for a while,"

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and, strange as it may seem, those of maturer years enjoy doing this at times.

Although nature is very close to the children, it is puzzling to them. The "Why?" of the inquisitive child is always perplexing the parent and the teacher.

In these little tales an interest in nature is awakened and stimulated by imaginative stories of beginnings. Incidentally the child sees through the story the elemental truth of moral law: the reward for goodness and the punishment of evil doing.

Froebel's philosophy is that stories should be positive in form, laying emphasis on the good, the beautiful, and the uplifting, and hiding from sight the evil, except in instances when the contrast of the evil might serve to intensify and make the good more desirable. It has been the aim of the author to carry out the Froebelian philosophy in these stories.



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WHY THE MOUNTAIN SENDS BACK AN ECHO

OLD Mother Nature took great pride in the big mountain which looked out towards the sunrise, for it made a home for some of her frail children: the birds had their nests in its rocks, the animals found shelter among its crags, and the tender little

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flowers obtained food from its soil. In fact, it had so long been helpful that Mother Nature did not expect it to be otherwise. Then, too, it had always been her weather prophet. When the day was going to be bright, she had only to look up to the rocky side of the mountain and it would smile back at her, but when a storm was coming, the mountain's signal was a frowning, cloudy face. So Mother Nature had come to look on it as a very necessary thing in her kingdom.

She knew that there were some earth people who did not like the mountain. "It shuts out the sunshine," said the people at its base. "It checks our way to the sea," said others.

But Mother Nature only shook her head and thought that, after all, earth people were never satisfied, and she loved the mountain all the more because some did not under-

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stand it. In fact, she thought that it did not have a single fault. She thought, too, that the mountain never did ugly things, but one night she found that she was mistaken.

It was a dark night. The wind was high and the snow was blowing in great drifts. A little lamb that belonged in the fold some distance from the mountain went astray because it was so blinded with the snow that it could not see the old sheep. Poor little lamb! It was so cold and so hungry, and it hadn't an idea where it could find its mother. It made the little fellow very lonely to remember how comfortable he had been on other nights in the fold. He stumbled over stones and into brambles seeking the right path, but he could not find it and at last he was ready to give up and lie down, but he remembered that his mother had told him that the wolf

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had his home in the mountain. If he should lie down here, the wolf might get him and he would never see his dear mother again. So he stumbled on farther until he found it impossible to go another step, and wearied and torn by the brambles he sank down.

As he lay there and looked up at the stars he thought of his mother and of the many times he had crept up close to her warm side and heard her talk to him in her gentle voice. Then suddenly he remembered that she had once told him if he were ever lost he was to call her and she would come to him if she were not fastened in the fold, but, even in the fold, she could hear him and would answer.

It was strange that he should have forgotten until he saw the stars winking and blinking at him. Then all of a sudden he knew that what made him remember was the stars,

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for on the night she told him this, the stars were shining and he was so happy and warm. So the little woolly lamb called, "Baa-baa-baa." Then he listened. At first he did not hear an answer, but the old mountain had heard him and he thought what a fine chance this would be to play a joke on the lamb, so he answered back, "Baa-baa-baa."

The little lamb was not sure that the voice he heard was his mother's so he tried again : "Baa-baa-baa." Then he listened, and back came the answer so clear : "Baa-baa-baa."

"Ah, that is my mother's house over there," he said, "but how strange! I thought that the mountain was over that way and I knew that the wolf lived in the mountain."

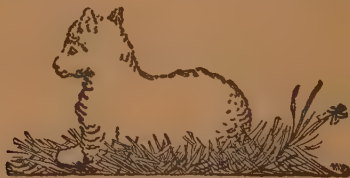
Then on and on he went, trying now and then to call and listen for the faint answer. The mountain was so happy over his joke that

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even the trees on the top shook as he laughed, but Mother Nature saw that the helpless lamb was coming nearer and nearer the wolf's home, and she came to the rescue.

Then the mountain grew very sober as she said, "I had thought, O my mountain, that you were truthful, but I find you deceive even the smallest and the weakest of my children. Now, because of this, I shall tell all the world that you are a great deceiver. You shall repeat your trick every time a word is spoken in your presence."

Then she left the mountain and led the little lamb to its mother's side. And ever since that night the mountain has been sending back echoes.





WHY THE MORNING-GLORY CLOSES ITS DOORS IN THE EARLY MORNING

PERHAPS you have wondered as you passed along the zigzag path in your garden why the morning-glory closes its doors just as soon as the sun gets high. It is a very long story and a very sad story, for it tells of some one who was very, very naughty.

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A long, long time ago there were no beautiful colored morning-glories. They were all white, white just like the snow, and they bloomed, just as they do now, all over the garden fence, but they kept their front doors open all the time. And all these morning-glories were very happy, for they always had their own way.

But one day old Mother Nature, who looked after all the flowers, saw that the morning-glories were getting spoiled. They had everything they wanted. When they needed a drink at night, the dew was given them. When they needed water in the daytime, or a bath, the rain fell. Their food was always brought up to them by their faithful servants, the veins, and their every wish was gratified. So she saw that the morning-glories were beginning to feel that the world

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was made for them, and she saw, too, that they were getting very, very spoiled. Why, they were even so wilful that they would turn their backs on each other and not speak for hours !

Now Mother Nature knew that if this kept on there would soon be no morning-glories growing on garden fences, for she felt sure people would not let such bad behavior go on right at their back doors, so she thought and thought how to make her selfish children see how foolish they were.

But while she was thinking something happened. All the earth grew dark as if it were dusk time, and a large black cloud came in the sky. The wind blew and blew, then the rain came down in torrents. Old Mother Nature kept watching the morning-glories. They seemed to be having a fine

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time playing hide-and-seek in the rain, but she saw two of her children that were not having a good time: one was a little black buzzing fly and one was a big red ant.

The little black buzzing fly was trying as hard as he could to crawl up the morning-glory stem and reach the wide-open front door, for he felt that then he could get down into the blossom and keep warm and dry, but each time that he succeeded in getting up just a little way the rain would push him back.

The big red ant, too, was trying to get shelter in the white morning-glory house, but she was so weak and the wind was so strong that she was having a hard time. But at last both the little black buzzing fly and the big red ant reached the wide-open front door. They both had to heave a great sigh of

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relief at the same time, and this made such a noise that the morning-glories turned to see who was walking into their house without asking. Now when they saw it was a little black buzzing fly and a big red ant, they tossed their heads and said, "Let's put them out in the rain. We cannot have our houses spoiled by such common folks."

Then they shook their houses so hard that the little black buzzing fly and the big red ant went tumbling to the ground and the morning-glories were shaking with laughter to see their plight when old Mother Nature's voice was heard. It was an angry voice and the morning-glories were frightened, so badly frightened that some of them turned purple, and others, that were not so much frightened, turned blue, and some were so ashamed that they turned a deep red, while others, that

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were bolder, blushed a faint pink, but some had not had a part in the trouble and they could not understand why Mother Nature was so angry, so they grew whiter than ever and all hung quivering on their stems to hear what she had to say.

“Children,” she said, “I am so ashamed. You have been allowed to have your own way so long that you have forgotten there are others in the world. Your front doors have been kept open so you could see out all over this beautiful garden. Now you must be punished, for day by day you have been growing more selfish. Every day when the sun gets high in the sky it shall be a signal for your doors to be closed and you must sleep inside your houses until the day grows old. Since you have not known how to treat visitors, you shall no longer keep

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your sign of friendship, an open door, before my less fortunate children."

Then old Mother Nature went away, and since that day the morning-glories have closed their doors in the early morning, and aside from the white ones, as white as snow, we have red, pink, purple, blue, and faintly colored morning-glories growing along the zigzag path in the garden.





WHY THE TOAD HAS WARTS ON HIS BODY

IF in the long, long ago you had seen a toad you would never have thought that the smooth, brown-skinned little creature, which hopped so happily about on the lawn without a thought of fear, was related in the least to the timid little toad of to-day that

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slips about in such a frightened manner, seemingly afraid to be seen by any one who by chance comes near. The skin of the toad we know is covered with ugly warts, which make it quite different from the smooth, sleek coat he used to wear. I am sure you would like to know what caused this sad change.

Once upon a time, long years ago, there lived in the beautiful garden of the king's palace a large toad. He had lived so long in the garden and had feasted on the fattest insects until he felt that the world was made for him and for him alone.

One day when the king was walking in his garden, he noticed this smooth-skinned toad sitting under a large lily leaf, winking and blinking in the sun. The sun was shining on his skin so that it seemed to be set with tiny diamonds.

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"What a beautiful toad!" said the king to the head gardener. "Build him a little glass house where he can be protected from the weather and fix for him the daintiest fare, for these creatures have ever been respected in my country, and he shall be the most honored toad in my kingdom."

This speech made the toad so proud that he puffed himself up to twice his usual size, and when the king had gone, he hopped all over the garden calling loudly, "Hear me! I am king of all the garden! The great king, himself, has said so. Hear me! I am king! Come and do me honor!"

So all the birds flew down from the trees and, hopping about before the toad, called out, "Chirp-chee, chirp-chee! The toad is king!"

The gray-squirrels frisked about before him

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and chattered gaily, "The toad is king! The toad is king!"

The spiders, in all the out-of-the-way corners, came before the toad and faintly called, "The toad is king! The toad is king!"

Even the little ants and lady-bugs came out, and nothing could be heard in all the garden but: "The toad is king! The toad is king!"

The butterfly left the bed of flowers where she had been sipping honey to come before him and call him king. And last of all the fuzzy brown caterpillar came crawling, crawling slowly at the end of the procession.

Now when they had all gone, the toad sat under the lily leaf and winked and blinked in the sunlight. He was quite happy and was going to take a nap when suddenly he heard a low "Buzz-buzz-buzz!" and a wasp

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flew by, looking for some mud with which to daub her nest and make it waterproof.

Now the wasp and the toad had never been friends, and when this proud creature remembered that the wasp alone of all the creatures in the garden had failed to call him king, he was very angry and called out loudly, "Hear me! Hear me! I am king of all the garden!"

But the wasp only buzzed the louder.

"Stop!" said the toad. "You *shall* hear me. Where are you going?"

"I am searching for some mud to make my nest waterproof," buzzed the wasp, "but the summer sun has been so hot that I cannot find a moist place anywhere."

"I have been made king of all the garden," said the toad, "and I can tell you where mud can be found, but first, you *must* call me king."

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"Never," said the wasp; "our queen rules us and I will never call a brown-skinned, slippery creature like you the king."

This angered the toad, but he was far too wise to show it.

"You have a good spirit," he said, "and I like you. Come to me this evening when the sun is going down and I will show you where you can find mud enough to make the best nest a common mud-dauber has ever known."

Now the wasp did not trust the toad, so when the sun began to sink behind the hills, she called all the wasp family together and told them what he had said.

"We will go with you and help you should the toad try to deceive you," they said.

So just as the sun was going down a large swarm of wasps could be seen flying away towards the lily-bed in the garden.

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"We will rest here in the rose garden," said the queen, "while you go on and find out what that boasting creature can do for you."

Now the toad had been very busy all the afternoon. He had gathered honey from the rose with which he planned to tempt the wasp. He had also gathered some juice from the poppy with which he hoped to put her to sleep. Then when he was sure she was fast asleep and could not sting, he had planned to crush her to death, for such he thought in his wicked heart should be the fate of all who refused to call him king.

So when the wasp came near the toad said, "Come under my lily leaf, dear wasp. I have prepared a dainty feast for you before you go on your long journey. See here is sweet honey I have gathered from the rose."

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The wasp tasted it and found that it was good. When she had sipped all the honey the toad said, "Now here is something that is not quite so sweet, but if you drink it, it will give you strength for your long journey." And he held the poppy juice to her lips.

Now when the queen of the wasps saw the trick the toad was trying to play, she led all her army to him and, lighting on him, they stung him until lumps were raised all over his body. He was so badly stung that he was unable to move, and the wasps went back to their nests, leaving him writhing in pain.

Several days passed, and the toad remained hidden far back among the lilies, afraid to come to the light. And when, at last, he ventured out, all the creatures in the garden came to see their king. They were surprised to find in place of a smooth-skinned, beautiful

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creature, one clothed in a rough skin covered with warts, for wherever the wasps had left a sting, there an ugly wart was found.

They all fled from him crying: "We cannot have you for our king! We really cannot have you for our king!"

And the toad crept back under the lily leaf and hid from view, and since that time toads have had warts all over their bodies, and they have tried to keep from the sight of all people, preferring to lie in the dark places where they will not be noticed.





WHY THE CHESTNUT HAS THREE COATS

AUTUMN days are sometimes quite cold, you know, but then Mother Nature understands just what all her children need, so she does not expect to have them fret and pout because some one else has more than they have.

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It was on one of those cold autumn days when Jack Frost had just given one little bite to the leaves and flowers that all the trouble in the chestnut woods began. This was at the time when chestnuts were easy to get, for there were no prickly burs to open and no hard shell to crack, for then the chestnuts wore only the thin inside coat which they now wear next to them. At this time they were much larger than they are now.

They had been quite happy all summer, filling their thin shells and feeling their fat sides which were to grow fatter still. But now when the autumn had come and Jack Frost had arrived they knew their best time of all had come, for were they not to swing for several days more, and then had not Mother Nature told them she would give them their first lesson in diving?

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All their lives they had swung out over the great sea of soft earth and brown leaves, but soon they were to know how it felt to put their small hands together and balance themselves on a bough and when a gentle breeze came by, let go and come down into the great soft sea. It made them dizzy to think of it. Mother Nature had said after they came down they would all go on a long, long journey. Some would go to a dark attic to wait until roasting time came. Others, she said, would go to little corner stores where boys and girls would come and buy them. And others would be picked up by children with rosy cheeks and long curls. Mother Nature had known one chestnut that had been carried for a long, long time in just such a little girl's pocket.

All these happy thoughts had kept the

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chestnuts from pouting, and now the time had almost come for all these things to come true. Happy little chestnuts! How they danced and pranced on the limbs, and what a good time they had playing tag with the sunbeams, now dodging this way and now that to keep from being caught. Then the soft little breeze joined sides with the sunbeams and pushed the chestnuts, first this way and then that, so they could catch them. Now while they were playing at this merry game one little chestnut became cross. I think he must have been caught and then he was all tired out, anyway, so he sat still for a while and thought all the ugly thoughts he could. Then all at once he spied the hickory nuts on a tree near by and, seeing that they had a heavy green coat on top of their shell coat, he began to pout.

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"Why, what's the matter?" asked a large chestnut which had just been pushed aside by the breeze.

"Oh," said the pouting chestnut, "Mother Nature has favorites. Here we are shivering, while all the hickory nuts have two coats."

Now when the large chestnut looked he found it was true, and then there were two chestnuts pouting. Just then the wind gave a whole bunch of chestnuts a sudden push and over they came, pell-mell, right on top of the two pouting nuts. They didn't have time to say, "Excuse me!" for both of the chestnuts sprang up and scratched them as hard as they could and then they began to quarrel, saying, "It isn't enough for Mother Nature to be unkind to us, but here you come pushing and jostling us about."

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"Why," said the chestnuts on the branch, "what has Mother Nature done to you?"

"It isn't what she *has* done, but what she *hasn't* done. Do you see those hickory nuts over on that hickory-tree? See their warm green coats over their shell coats. Mother Nature knows the days are getting cold and still she does not bring us any warm coats."

So the whole branch of chestnuts joined in the cry, and soon all the chestnuts on all the trees were crying and pouting because they did not have warm coats.

Mother Nature had been so busy taking down all the messages from Winter, North Wind, and Jack Frost, that she did not hear the first murmur of discontent, but when the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling, she looked up and hastened to the chestnut trees to see what was the trouble. As soon as she

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heard she said, "Foolish little chestnuts! You have not known when you were well off, but you shall have the warm coats you want so much." Then she looked over the trees and said, "You will all need to be made much smaller so there will be room for your coats and you, too; just now there is only room enough for you."

Then all at once each pouting, puckering mouth seemed to draw up tight, and all the little chestnuts grew smaller and smaller until they were just the size they are now.

"Now," said Mother Nature, "as you have been scratching and fighting this morning, I am going to give you a bur coat, and even the little children will be afraid to touch you with their soft hands while you wear it."

Then kind Mother Nature felt so sorry for them that she added, "But when Jack Frost comes in the autumn, he will take your bur

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coat off so the children can find you without trouble, but it will mean days of waiting, and during that time I hope you will learn your lesson of patience."

Then she went away and the chestnut world grew dark, for over the thin coat they had always worn there grew a thick coat of brown shell, and over this a fur-lined coat with sharp needles on the outside.

And ever since the chestnuts have worn three coats, but they have never been known to pout since that day when Mother Nature gave them their wish.





WHY THE BUTTERFLY HAS SUCH BEAUTIFUL WINGS

ONE bright, beautiful morning in May, a large butterfly fluttered from the snug little cradle in which she had been sleeping all winter. But she found she was far too weak to fly, so she clung to a tiny bough

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near by until her wings grew larger and larger and dryer and dryer. Then she felt stronger and knew that she could fly.

Oh, how happy she was as she sailed away over the fields, taking a drink of dew here and a sip of honey there as she went along! Life seemed so sweet that the butterfly had not found time to even look at herself, but now, as she passed over a brook, she glanced down and saw a pair of dull black wings reflected in the water. She was not at all displeased with her reflection, for at that time all butterflies had plain wings with no pretty splashes of color here and there. She was just as handsome as any member of the butterfly family. So she flew on and on, lighting daintily on a daisy that welcomed her gladly, then again pausing to speak to a wild poppy which gave her a sip of delicious

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honey. This made the butterfly so sleepy she paid the poppy quite a long visit and slept in the dainty red room which is always open to visitors. And so all her days were days of sunshine and happiness. She had never seen suffering of any kind and did not know there was such a thing in the world.

But one very hot morning when she had been unusually happy, chasing another butterfly of which she was very fond and playing butterfly hop-scotch, she started off across the meadow to find some dew to quench her thirst, for she thought that perhaps over by the brook where the willows hung so low it might not yet be dry.

Away she flew, as happy as a butterfly could be on a summer day, when what should she see lying on the grass but a little bird. Its feathers were covered with blood and it was

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scarcely breathing. The butterfly saw at once that it was nearly dead, and, forgetting her own thirst, she flew away as fast as she could and brought several drops of water from the brook. These she gave to the bird, and fanned it until her wings were so tired they dropped down on the bleeding body.

At last the wounded bird opened his eyes and seemed to be gaining strength, but the butterfly would not leave him.

"No," she said, when the little bird protested in a weak voice, "I cannot leave you for you still need help."

So all day long the butterfly hovered over the bird to keep the sun from its poor hurt body, and when the evening came she helped him back to the tree where his mother lived. Oh, how happy the mother bird was! And the butterfly was happy, too, because she had

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found a chance to help, and she flew away into the night, so tired and sleepy that she was forced to choose for her resting-place the first branch she found.

When morning came she was rested again and flew away through the meadow to see the brown butterfly. But on her way she crossed the brook and, happening to look in, she saw her own reflection. She started back and looked again, for she could not think that she had really seen her image. Instead of the butterfly with plain black wings she saw a handsome creature with crimson spots sprinkled over the black, and over all were specks which shone like diamonds. She was so surprised that she almost lost her balance and came near falling into the water, but at last she got safely across and started to find the owl, that was

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thought by every one to be the wisest creature on the globe. She felt sure he would be asleep, but she hurried on and at last came to his hollow tree. It was a great task to waken him, but soon he came out, winking and blinking in the sunlight and grumbling because he had been disturbed.

The butterfly was not long in telling him her errand. "Tell me first," said the wise old owl, "what you have been doing, and I will tell you why the change has come."

Then the butterfly told him all that had happened.

"Who, who, who," said the owl, "who ever heard anything easier to understand? Look at your wings. What do those red spots remind you of?"

"They look more like the bird's blood than anything else," said the butterfly.

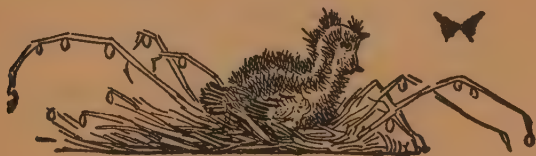
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"And what does all that diamond dust look like?"

"Why, it looks as I think the dew would look if it were dry."

"Just right," said the owl; "old Mother Nature always rewards her children," and he went back into the hollow tree grumbling: "Who, who, who ever heard of breaking an owl's rest like this?"

The butterfly flew away, knowing that the owl was right. Wherever the bird's blood had touched her wings it had left a scarlet spot, and over all this was sprinkled diamond flakes, and since that time all butterflies have had beautiful wings.





VI WHY THE TEAKETTLE SINGS

IT was such a poor little house with its windows that shook and shook when the wind blew, and its floor, over which was stretched an old rag carpet to keep the wind from coming up through the cracks, but it

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was so nice and clean, so spick and span, you could eat on the old rag carpet and feel that it was as clean as a table, and you could see your face in the tin pans which stood in bright rows on the shelves in the corner. It looked very cheerful in that little room because in the windows there bloomed bright red geraniums, and on the stove sat a little copper teakettle from the spout of which came steam, pure, warm, and grayish-white.

But it was sad in that kitchen, because in it lived alone a dear little old lady with a little wrinkled face and white, white hair.

She didn't want to live all alone, oh, no. She wanted more than she could tell to have a little girl to live with her—a little girl with golden hair, and eyes as blue as the sky.

Often the little old woman would sit down in her spick and span kitchen and rock back

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and forth, back and forth, and sigh long, sad sighs.

When the copper kettle, which kept sending out steam in little grayish-white circles, saw how sad she was, it felt so very sorry, for it heard her say, "Oh, if I only had a little child in this lonesome house with me—a little child who would sing a merry song!"

Then the little copper teakettle was so sad that it forgot to send out steam. It wanted to help the dear old lady, and it thought and thought how it could do it. By and by it said to itself, "I can't sing a very loud song, and I can't sing a very sweet song, but I *can* hum a merry little tune, and I shall do my best."

Then it began to send out grayish-white circles of steam, and it began to sing the dearest, queerest little song you ever heard. Oh, how it did sing! It sang louder and louder,

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sweeter and sweeter, clearer and clearer, until, at last, the little old woman with the little old wrinkled face and the white, white hair, looked up.

“Who is that I hear singing?” she asked softly. “Why, bless me, if it isn’t the dear little copper kettle, and it’s singing to cheer me! Bless its heart! I’ll not sit here and weep and weep, but I’ll be up and making things bright and clean, for I have a little songster right here in my own kitchen.”

So the little teakettle sang away while the little old woman swept the floor and made things cheerful.

Now all this time the queen of the fairies had seen how sad the little old woman was and she longed to help her, but she had not yet found a way. She was so happy when she saw what the thoughtful little kettle

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had done that she said that the teakettle should always sing when warm and grayish-white rings of steam came from it. And ever since that time the teakettle has made many a home happy with its cheerful music.





VII WHY THE MISTLETOE GROWS HIGH ON THE TREES

I AM sure you would have been happy had you lived when the mistletoe grew along on the ground instead of high up on the trees as you now find it, for then you could have gathered all you wished for your Christmas

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decoration without much trouble. At that time the berries on the mistletoe were blood-red like those on the holly, but now, as you know, they are white like wax. You would doubtless like to know how this change came about, so I will tell you.

It happened in this way. News had been sent abroad that the Forest Fairy was to walk through the woods that day and all the trees and vines and growing things of the forest were quivering with excitement.

"If we only knew," said the trees, "just when the Forest Fairy entered the woods, we could all wave her a grand welcome and make her know how happy we are to have her with us. Who among us is tall enough to give a signal?"

"I am not," said the pine-tree. "My hands reach only to the oak-tree's shoulder."

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"I am not," said the oak-tree. "Even from my topmost branches I cannot see the edge of the forest. If I were only a little taller, I could see, but, stretch as far as I can, I cannot reach up high enough."

Then a strange low voice was heard.

"Who is speaking?" called all the trees and growing things at once.

"It is I, the little mistletoe. I will tell you when the Forest Fairy enters the woods."

"You?" said the pine-tree, looking down from her lofty height. "Why, your place has always been at my feet!"

"You?" said the oak-tree. "Why, you do not know what you are saying, for even from my highest branches I cannot see the entrance to the forest."

"That may be true, but if you will help

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me, old oak-tree, I will tell you when the Forest Fairy enters the woods."

"I will help you all I can," said the kind old oak-tree, "but I do not understand how you plan to manage it."

Then the mistletoe threw out a little winding sprout which attached itself to the trunk at the oak-tree and slowly it climbed up, up, over the rough bark, up, up, to the branching limbs. It was a long, weary climb, and time after time the poor tired mistletoe stopped to rest. And each time she stopped, the trees saw that the blood-red color was leaving her berries and they were growing pale and white. It seemed at times that it just *must* stop, it was so faint and weary. But, little by little, it climbed on and soon it reached the tip-top of the highest branches. It was now so exhausted that its berries were pale and white,

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just like wax, but still it called out cheerily, "I will tell you when the Forest Fairy comes, for I can see the very entrance to the woods."

Soon all the trees heard her call, "She comes! She comes! The Forest Fairy comes!" Then they sang a welcome and waved a salute with their highest branches.

This pleased the Forest Fairy very much and she asked in wonder, "How did you, oh my trees in the inner forest, know that I was coming?"

Then they told her how the mistletoe had toiled and climbed that they might welcome her, and she saw it in the very top of the oak-tree, with its berries as white as milk.

"You dear, faithful mistletoe!" she said. "You shall keep your white berries as a badge of your faithfulness, and you and your children after you shall always keep the high seat which you have so worthily won to-day.

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You shall be protected, as you have never been before, from the destructive animals and ruthless hands of the earth people and when you are taken from your home in the highest branches of the oak-tree, it shall be at the cost of such an effort that you will be prized and valued, even when your leaves have withered."

And so it has been ever since that day, the mistletoe has grown high up on the topmost branches of the oak, and when we gather it at the Yule-tide, it is kept until the last leaf has withered, for so the Forest Fairy has decreed.





VIII WHY THE DANDELION'S STEM IS SHORT

AGES and ages ago when the world was very young, the little yellow dandelion which seems to hide among the grass-blades on your lawn grew on a much longer stem. It was such a long, long stem that the little yellow eyes could look all around and see

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what was going on in all the flower-beds on all the lawn. But that was just what caused the trouble. She saw so much and then, instead of keeping it to herself, she told all the other flowers the gossip of the lawn.

Naughty little dandelion! She would get up early in the morning and see and hear a great deal, and then, before night, every one knew it, but the chief trouble was she did not always tell the truth about what she saw.

One morning when the whole lawn was clean and sweet and every promise was for a happy day, Mrs. Dandelion arose very early, for she felt that her yellow hair needed all the sunshine it could get. She had noticed several gray hairs in it the day before and she felt that the sunshine was good for the golden locks of the Dandelion family. So she took the dew that kind Mother Nature had placed for her

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morning bath and had a fine plunge. Then, feeling unusually well, she looked out over the lawn to see what the other flowers were doing.

She was fond of her own family, but the hyacinths, the tulips, and the crocuses, which bloomed in the bed by the porch, she disliked very much. She knew they thought themselves better than the dandelions because they had been bought at a floral shop and planted with great care, while all the Dandelion family just tramped into the lawn when spring came without being invited.

But Mrs. Dandelion was sure there was never a better family than her own, and she looked over to where Mr. Dandelion stood so straight and tall with his bright hair combed pompadour. He was so erect and handsome that she tossed her head proudly and turned towards the Dandelion children, who were

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already out for a game of ring-a-round-a-rosey in the morning sunshine.

When Mrs. Dandelion had taken a good look at all her family, she was sure they were as good as those that blossomed in the bed, but when she turned her head and saw the blue hyacinth, standing up so proud and stiff, and the white hyacinth staring so coldly at her, and the tulips and crocuses with their rich dresses and pretty figures, she felt very unhappy and thought that she would like to make them unhappy, too.

Just then she saw a little robin fly down in the bed right by the stiff blue hyacinth. Now the robins, the hyacinths, the tulips, and the crocuses had always been good friends, but Mrs. Dandelion thought if she could just cause a fuss between the flowers in that bed and the robins, she would have all she

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desired, for the birds would tear their lovely dresses and make them sorry that they had ever been so proud. So when the robin flew to the flower-bed and picked a black spider from the stem of the blue hyacinth and then flew back to her babies again, Mrs. Dandelion called over the lawn, "Say, blue hyacinth, I am sorry to tell you, but that robin just picked one of your blue bells and he has carried it up to his nest in the oak-tree."

The blue hyacinth was getting ready to call to the robin, and the robin was getting ready to come down and explain, when such a queer thing happened. Mrs. Dandelion's head went down into the grass with a great bump, Mr. Dandelion's head went down into the grass with a great bump, and all the little Dandelions who were playing ring-a-round-a-rosey could not be seen, for they, too, had

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gone down into the grass. And when the tall blue hyacinth looked, she saw that instead of the long stems they had before, the stems were short, so short that they could not see over the garden, for Mother Nature had seen it all and she said that people who could not tell the truth about what they saw ought not to be able to see. And now all young dandelions who love to gossip grow on short stems. Sometimes when they are old and gray and have learned how to behave themselves, you will find them with long stems, but the young silly ones cannot be trusted.





WHY THE BEGGAR-TICKS CAN STEAL A RIDE

IT was such an ugly part of the meadow that the beggar-ticks which grew by the brookside did not like it, and it is no wonder that they looked towards the long green stretch where the daisies grew and wished they could

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fly. But standing still and wishing, you know, will never take beggar-ticks to daisy-fields any more than it will take little boys and little girls on long journeys. The beggar-ticks thought and thought how they could make their wish come true.

One day the wind blew very hard, so hard that it shook the leaves from the elm-tree whose branches hung over the brook, and the leaves came, piff-paff, down on the water and floated away towards the daisy-field.

"That is a good idea," said the beggar-ticks. "We can pull and pull until we loosen ourselves. Then we, too, can float on down the brook to the daisy-field."

So they pulled and pulled until they were so tired they thought their fat little bodies would break in two. When they were so exhausted that they couldn't pull any more, they

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rested, and then started to pull again harder than ever. Never did beggar-ticks work so hard, and at last they were loose and, piff-paff, down they fell into the water.

It was not nearly such smooth sailing as they had thought. First, the water carried them on so swiftly that it almost took their breath away, then they were washed up on a large rock and left there, high and dry. They felt sure they would perish, but, by and by, a heavy rain came and washed them down into the brook again. Then what a good time they had, sailing along so smoothly! They met a great many friends they had known in their home by the brookside. They were surprised to see the elm leaves, which had started several days before they did, but they, too, had been washed ashore and were just setting out again. Then,

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farther down the stream, they met some acorn-cups, which had lived near them in the fifth story of the old oak-tree, and later on they met some grass-blades, which had lived on the brookside near them. They said they hadn't cared to make the journey at all, but the white sheep, which had been feeding in the meadow and had caused so much trouble in their home, pulled them up by the roots and, as it meant a long journey or being swallowed by the sheep, they had decided to wiggle out and take the former.

By this time the whole party had reached the shallow part of the brook and the beggar-ticks, the elm leaves, the acorn-cups and the grass-blades all lingered to look at the beautiful sunset which made the meadow where the daisies grew look like a paradise.

"Oh," said the beggar-ticks, "if we could

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only go as fast as that old white sheep, how happy we should be ! ”

But just then they heard such a commotion on the bank and when they turned to look, they saw a little red ant that was much distressed because she had crossed the brook on a stick to get some food for her babies, and now her stick had washed away and she could not get back to her home again.

“ We wish,” said the grass-blades, “ we could help you, but really we can’t. We have had a great deal of trouble with that old white sheep and we dare not go near the bank.”

“ We would help you,” said the acorn-cups, “ but if you happened to step a little too far on one side, you would turn us over, and we are having far too good a time to give it up.”

Then the elm leaves spoke up : “ We are going to visit our cousins that live farther

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up the brook, and it is already sunset. We cannot help you."

Then the kind little beggar-ticks looked up the brook and saw how far away the daisy-field was. They knew that if they stopped it would grow dark and they might get lost. But they felt they could not leave the ant on that side of the brook, when her babies needed her so much on the other side. So they joined hands across the water, which took a long time, you know, and they formed a little bridge on which the red ant tripped across and landed safely on the other side. But the beggar-ticks saw it was getting dark and there was no hope of reaching the daisy-field before night. They were wet and cold, for the ant's weight had made them go under the water several times. Really it did seem that they might have been selfish and gone

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on with the others. Poor little beggar-ticks! They were almost ready to cry with the disappointment when they heard old Mother Nature, who is always glad to help her children when they are good.

She called them from the bank and said: "Have you strength enough left to reach the bank, little beggar-ticks?"

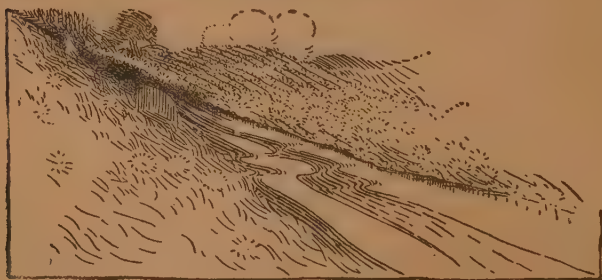
And they, knowing who it was, struggled hard to reach it and, when at last they succeeded and were resting their tired little bodies on the brown earth, old Mother Nature said, "You have been good and kind and you shall be rewarded. Put your hands on your sides where the ant touched you in crossing the brook." Then she laughed and said, "What do you find?"

"Why, little hooks!" said the surprised beggar-ticks.

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"Now," said Mother Nature, "here is the woolly sheep that feeds beside the brook. When she comes near, catch hold of her wool with your hooks and you will get to the daisy-field in a little while."

And sure enough, before those beggar-ticks could say a word, the sheep was rubbing against a tree in the daisy-field and off they jumped just in time to say "How do you do?" to the elm leaves, the acorn-cups and the grass-blades. And since that time, beggar-ticks have been able to get rides whenever they want to take a trip.





WHY WE HAVE FOUR- LEAF CLOVERS

AS you play over the soft green grass in the summer I am sure you often pick four-leaf clovers, and feel that as long as you carry them with you, no ill luck can come to you, but I doubt if you have ever thought

THAT'S WHY STORIES

why some clovers have only three leaves, while others have four.

It was in the days when fairies lived and held their fairy courts on the earth that the four-leaf clover first came to us. The place where they liked best to hold their court was on the clover hill. It was here that they held their springtime revel and, after one of these meetings in the dewy clover-field at night, little children awoke to find among the green leaves such beautiful pink and white blossoms which the fairies had dropped.

For a long, long while the fairies took great delight in leaving the children these dainty blossoms as a remembrance, but as the years wore on, the little people who played on the hill ceased to notice the flowers. They had seen them so often and there were such a great number of them that they grew to be

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every-day things and were no longer a rarity.

When the clovers saw that the children no longer cared for them, they hung their heads and felt that life was indeed not worth living, and when the fairies came to hold their court they were alarmed and said, "Why, little clovers, why do you hang your heads and weep? Hold up your heads and be happy."

"No, no," said the clovers, "there is no use in holding up our heads now, for the children have ceased to care for us."

"Shame! shame! little clovers," said the fairies. "That may be true about the children, but we are here for our regular dance, and we need you for our soft carpet."

But still the clovers did not rise, for they felt that the slightest effort was useless, as the children had ceased to notice them.

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This worried the fairies very much, for they had learned to love every clover, so they told the trouble to their queen.

She was grieved to hear that no soft carpet would be ready for the fairies' dance. "Now, my little clovers," she said, and her voice was so soft and sweet that even the breeze stopped to listen, "it grieves me that the children have ceased to care for your pretty little tufted blossoms, but we, who gave you the blossoms, love you and need you. Raise your heads and make a soft carpet for our dance to-night and you shall be rewarded."

"No," said each pouting clover, "if we make the soft carpet all we shall get for our trouble will be bruises which your dancing will make on our leaves."

"It is true," said the fairy queen, "that we shall bruise your leaves, but to all the clovers

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who help to make our carpet I will give for every bruise an extra leaf, and the children will hunt many, many hours for those of you who bear the four leaves."

Then all over the clover-field you could see the fallen heads rising, but some still hung their heads. And it was as the fairy queen had said, all who offered themselves for their use were bruised, it is true, but for the bruises they were given an extra leaf, and little children have ever since valued the four-leaf clover for the luck it is supposed to bring.





XI WHY THE CATTAILS WEAR VELVET COATS

HOW nice and warm the cattails look as they sway by the brookside, back and forth, back and forth, in the merry sunshine. But there was a time when the cattails did not wear such pretty warm velvet jackets

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as they now do. It was a long, long time ago, in the ages when the world was new and cattails were hard to find. They were green then, a light cold green, but they were happy and contented and Mother Nature loved her peaceful little children who went on living and growing because the children loved them, and this was all they wanted.

They had never had anything to trouble them about their own lot, and they had never cared enough for any one else to trouble especially about theirs. The flowers and sedges which grew in the meadow near the cattails had never attracted them very much, but one morning they awoke and what should they spy in the green grass near them but a whole family of brown-eyed susans. The cattails didn't speak, for they had always been considered just a little stiff, but the

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daisies didn't wait for an introduction, but nodded and bowed in a most friendly way and when the cattails saw that they were ready to be friendly they, too, bowed and nodded. Each morning it was the same way, the cattails nodded a greeting and the daisies responded, or if the daisies were the first ones out, they began the morning with a cheerful bow.

As the days wore on and the leaves began to change their colors from a bright green to yellow, red, and gold, it was noticed that the cattails bent more and more on their slender stalks towards the brown-eyed susans.

At last one day when Mother Nature was walking in her meadow, she stopped a while before the cattails and touched their slender stems. Then they told her all that was in their hearts, for they never kept anything

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from her. They were always sure that she would listen to them with pleasure.

“ Oh, Mother Nature,” they said, “ we have never cared for the flowers and sedges that grow in your meadow, but we do love the brown-eyed susans devotedly. We are not complaining, but we would like it so much if we could wear coats the color of their eyes.”

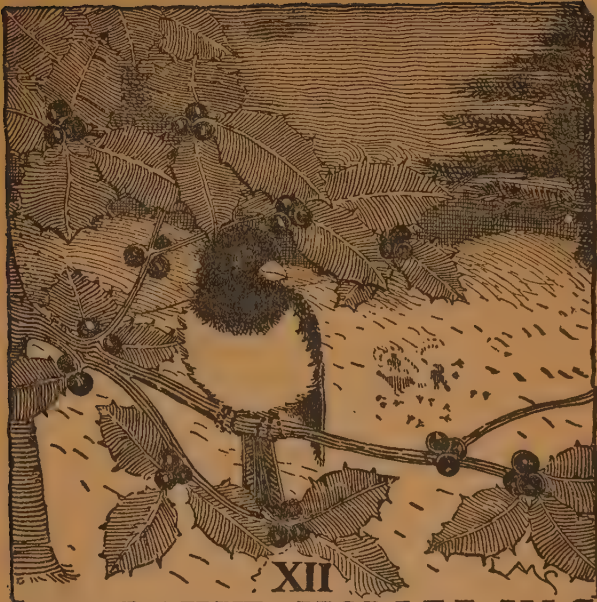
Then Mother Nature patted each round green head and said, “ This is the first thing you have ever asked of me, little cattails. Every breeze that blows brings me a request from my other children, but from you this is the first. Let me tell you how you can get your wish. Keep on looking at the brown eyes of the daisies that you love so much and some day you will find your green suit growing softer and finer and in place of the coarse coat you now wear you shall have a soft,

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brown velvet jacket. But do not forget to look steadily at the brown centers of the daisies, for we grow to be like that which we constantly admire."

The cattails did not forget, and one morning when they looked down, instead of the green coats which they had seen all their lives, each was clothed in soft brown velvet.





XII WHY THE HOLLY HAS RED BERRIES

I AM sure you have often noticed how round and red the berries are on the holly-tree, but perhaps you did not know that there was a time when this same holly-tree had no berries at all.

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That was in the days of long ago when Mother Nature had but few children and could watch them carefully. She had always loved the holly-tree, for it had in every way tried to do just what she desired.

It was a cold, cold day in winter. The ground was covered with snow and all the ponds had a roof of ice over their water. Almost all the bird family had gone South, and the few that remained could scarcely find enough to eat. It was cold, oh so cold, on the lawn where the holly-tree grew. The wind was blowing the snow here and there and the sun had hidden his face behind a cloud. A little snow-bird, which had unfortunately been caught in a snare, hopped painfully over the ground leaving a red trail of blood to mark its tracks. Poor little bird, it had harmed no one and yet it was suffering!

THAT'S WHY STORIES

"If I can only reach that rose-bush where the red roses grow in the summer time," he said to himself, "I shall be sheltered from this cruel wind."

Soon he crept in among the leaves of the rose-bush, but he was not allowed to stay there long, for the rose-bush rudely pushed its branches from side to side and cried peevishly, "Get away, little bird! You are dropping your blood all over my limbs! See, my leaves are covered! Get away!" And with a sharp toss, she knocked the little bird from her branches.

All this time Mother Nature was watching and when she saw how cruel the rose-bush had been, she shook her head and sighed as she said, "Poor thoughtless rose-bush! She forgets that I have given her all she needs, and have never let her know a want, and now this is how she treats one of my unfor-

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fortunate children." As she shook her head sorrowfully, she heard a soft low voice.

"Come under my branches, little wounded bird," it said. "My leaves have sharp points, but I will not let them hurt you."

Mother Nature saw that it was the holly speaking, and she was glad to see that one of her children, at least, had a kind heart.

Painfully the little bird hopped to the lowest branches of the holly-tree, and tenderly the little tree folded her leaves about the wounded body. She did not heed the blood dropping from the bird's side, but let the wind make low, soothing music through her branches, which soon lulled the bird to sleep.

Then Mother Nature came and stood before the holly-tree. "My little child," she said, "you have done a good deed. You have sheltered one of my helpless children.

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Henceforth there shall grow on your branches, wherever the bird's blood has fallen, round, red berries, and I shall show to all the world your good deed, for when winter comes and the ground is white with snow, then your bright berries shall make the cold world look cheerful and your branches shall be loved and sought by all the earth people.

"But as for you," she said, turning to the rose-bush, "you shall henceforth have thorns growing down your sides."

And she vanished, leaving the rose-bush clothed in thorns and the holly-tree covered with red berries.





XIII WHY THE MAPLE LEAF HAS FIVE FINGERS

WHY, haven't you ever noticed that the maple leaf has five points which we like to think are five fingers? Well, if you haven't, the next time you find a maple leaf just look and you will see that this is true.

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There was a time when the maple leaf was shaped more like the leaves found on a pear-tree, but it wasn't nearly so pretty then as it is now, and this is the way the change came.

Once upon a time there was a little brownie, who was really a very pleasant brownie to have about when he was in a good humor, but when he was angry, he was enough to frighten any one. When everything went his way, he was pleasant and sweet, but when he couldn't have just what he wanted, at just the minute he wanted it, he flew into a dreadful passion, and woe to the person or thing that offended him.

It was because of this that the queen of the fairies sent him out of her kingdom and said he should not return until his disposition had improved. Now when she made this decree she knew that something would be likely to

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suffer from his wrath, so she sent one of her fairy messengers to watch the brownie and bring her word when he injured anything so that she could make it right, for it was not her will that in curing the brownie of his evil temper she should cause trouble to any one in the earth world.

You can imagine what a hard time this little fairy messenger had, for the brownie was as quick as the wind and traveled miles and miles every day. All went well during the spring and summer, and the fairy messenger was just beginning to think that the brownie had been cured of his ill temper and that her services would soon be needed no longer, when the first frosty days of autumn came and she found that she was mistaken.

Now, although this brownie was very fond of all things that were pleasant to the taste,

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he especially liked fresh, ripe chestnuts. The first morning that the white frost could be seen on the ground he decided that he would go out and look for a chestnut-tree. He searched and searched, but not a tree could he find. When he was all tired out with his search he remembered a little charm the queen of the fairies had taught him several years before. He remembered, too, that she had told him to use this charm when he wanted to find anything, it mattered not what it was. So he shut his eyes, turned around three times and said :

“Enie, menie, minie, mo,
Show me now which way to go;
Esty, nesty, cresty, nave,
Where is that which I do crave?”

Then, as if in answer to his charm, a little red bird in a maple-tree close by chirped out,

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"Right here, right here, right here, here, here, here!"

Oh, how happy the brownie was! He sprang forward with a glad cry, for now he was to have what he loved above all things, some nice ripe chestnuts. But to his surprise he saw no round burs cracked open by the frost of the night before. He saw only a maple-tree in which sat a saucy bird calling, "Right here, right here, right here, here, here, here!" In a fit of terrible temper he rushed towards the tree, intending to vent his passion on the bird because she had deceived him, but she flew away above his head and called saucily back, "Right here, right here, right here, here, here, here!"

How angry that little brownie was! He seized the limbs of the maple-tree and tore the leaves in shreds. Away flew the little fairy messenger to the queen, who was very

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sad indeed when she found that the little maple had been caused to suffer.

"This must not be," she said. Then she came, herself, and with her fairy thread she sewed up all the leaves, but they were so badly torn that she could not give to them again the smooth edge they once had, but she gave them instead the ragged edge with five fingers, which we think very pretty indeed.

And what became of the brownie—did you ask? I'll tell you that in my next story. You read it and find out, then if you have a bad temper you had better learn to control it at once, for your fate might be as bad as his.





XIV

WHY THE PINE TREE MOANS IN WINTER

THAT'S so, I promised to tell you what became of the little brownie who could not control his temper. Well, it is a very sad story and I hope all little children who get angry because they cannot have their

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own way, will remember it and learn that this only makes matters worse.

When the brownie had torn the maple leaves in shreds, he ran away and hid among the rushes, for he felt sure the fairy messenger would bring the queen to repair the damage he had done. Here he lay until he was sure the queen had gone away, then he crept out and went on just as he always had.

Now when he saw the fairy messenger you can imagine what he asked her.

He was relieved when the little fairy smiled her sweetest smile and said, "She says you shall go unpunished this time, but, if ever again you lose your temper and harm a single thing, you shall suffer the greatest punishment she can give you." Then the brownie jumped and capered about and declared that he would never again lose his

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temper, but, although he did try, he did not try hard enough, for when the winter came and the ground was covered with snow and the brook was roofed with ice he found it hard to travel about as freely as he had in the summer and early fall.

One day as he was crossing the brook, he slipped and fell on the thin ice. Now a fall on the ice is bad enough, but when the ice breaks and lets you down suddenly into the cold, cold water, it is even worse. And that was just what happened to the brownie.

Oh, how cold it was! Every time he took hold of a piece of ice it broke, letting him down again into the icy water.

"Help! Help!" called the brownie. But all that could be heard was the echo: "Help-h-elp," which the hills sent back.

At last the poor brownie succeeded in

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reaching the bank, but his clothes were soaked and his temper was beyond control. Seizing a long stick, he lashed the water of the brook until it rose in a thick foam at his feet and he might have been lashing it yet had not a stern voice sounded at his elbow.

"Shame! Shame!" it said. And turning he saw the fairy queen and, too late, he remembered what she had said would happen if he again lost his temper.

As soon as the brownie realized what his fate might be he began to beg for another chance.

"No, I have given you all the trials you deserve," she said. "I shall send you to the place you dislike above all other places." The brownie shuddered, for of all places he disliked the pine forest the most.

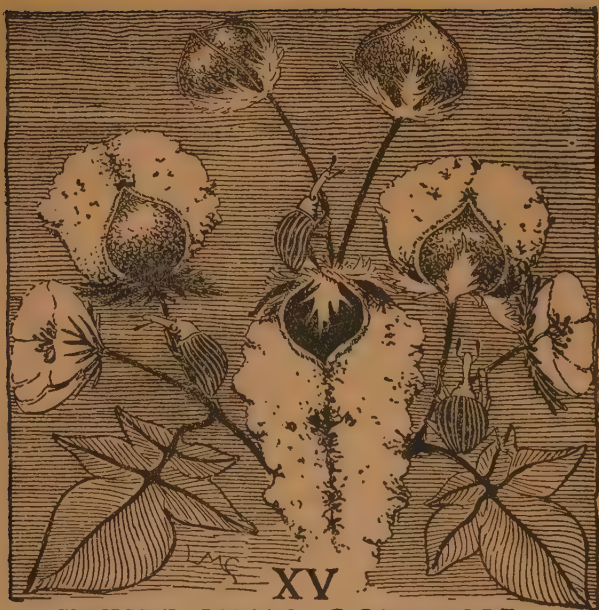
"Don't, please don't send me to the pine forest!" he begged.

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"That is just where you shall go," said the fairy queen. "And no longer shall you be a brownie with an ungovernable temper, but you shall be only a low moan. And as you seem to be able to control your temper in the spring and summer, but are unable to keep it under control in the autumn and winter, you shall be heard especially when the winds of the fall and winter blow through the pine forest. When the people hear you they will shudder, and no one will love you."

And in a twinkling the brownie was gone, and over in the pine woods was heard a low moan as the wind swept through the trees.





WHY THE COTTON IS SO WHITE

IF you have never seen a field of cotton, then you do not know how pretty and white it looks with its snow-white blossom set in its little open shell. And, if you have seen a field of cotton even when it looks its

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very prettiest, perhaps you did not know that in the time when the fairies roamed over the earth the cotton was not white at all, but was always kept in a little brown house. Of course we think the dress of white much prettier than a dress of brown would be. Mother Nature thought so, too, and that is why we find it white to-day.

It happened in this way: the Southland, you know, was always warm, and the little children who lived there had never seen any snow. They knew only the sunshine and warm, balmy days. Mother Nature's children, the worms, the bugs, and tiny insects had never seen the snow, either. They lived day in and day out basking in the bright sunshine with now and then a rainy day to make the earth soft so that they could get their food better. Happy little insects! The cotton-

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plant loved them. They ran in and out among the leaves and never so much as tasted one. The earthworms kept the earth nice and soft so the plant could get fresh food each day, and the bugs ate the worms which would harm the roots and leaves.

So, as the days went on, the plant grew larger and larger and the buds came, then the buds changed to pale yellow blossoms, and the pale yellow blossoms changed to pink blossoms, and the pink blossoms changed to a deep red. Then the blossom disappeared and in its place was a brown shell. It was not a very beautiful sight, for the whole field looked as if a fire had suddenly burned it. Often the cotton heard the earth children who lived in the Southland say, "What an ugly brown field!"

But one day a strange thing happened. It

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was after a day of rain. The wind began to blow and it grew so cold that the little children had to go indoors. All the little bugs and worms shivered among the cotton-stems, and by and by, when the night came, there fell from the sky little feathery flakes. At first the bugs called out, "Oh, look, it is sugar!" and they stuck out their little sharp tongues to taste it. But no, it could not be sugar. It was not sweet and it changed to water as soon as it touched their tongues.

Soon the flakes were coming thick and fast and the poor little worms were so cold that they could scarcely move.

The cotton-blossoms saw how cold they were and called to them, "Each of us will take care of one little worm or one little bug." Then such a hurry and flurry as there was in that cotton field! Every worm crawled as

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fast as he could to a cotton-boll, and every bug found one for himself, too. Then the cotton-plant bent over them tenderly, and lovingly sheltered them from the cold. "Oh, we are so warm!" sighed the worms. "We too, are warm," said the cotton, "but we know not why. Our dresses are covered with the snow, but under that we feel as warm as we would if we were under a warm blanket."

And so the long night passed, but not for one minute did the cotton-blossoms forget the little people they were sheltering, and when the morning came and with it the bright sunshine, it was only a little while before all the snow was melted. But the cotton-blossom did not lose its snowy mantle, and when the children came out from the houses they clapped their hands and cried, "Oh, see the field of snowy blossoms! They are so beauti-

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ful!" The cotton looked down at her dress, and instead of the ugly brown she was dressed in gleaming white and when all the blossoms called out, "Why is this?" Mother Nature said, "I thought it best to let the world see your beautiful white heart. Last night you did a noble thing which I cannot forget, and now you shall wear your kind heart on the outside at a certain time each year."

So at the proper time the cotton bursts its brown house and comes out in its beautiful white gown.





XVI WHY THE THISTLE IS COVERED WITH THORNS

IT was in the days when the thistle had no thorns that Tifton Meadow was said to be the most beautiful spot in the world. It is small wonder that every one felt sure that the fairies' home was in Tifton Meadow, for all

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over it was a thick carpet of grass, and running through it was the dearest, queerest, little brook which sang and danced on its way. All along the brook were large willows, the branches of which hung low over the water, and all over the thick carpet of grass which covered this fairy playground were beautiful purple thistles, soft feathery thistles, with long green stems and fluffy purple tops. There were also daisies, with large yellow centers and white petals, modest little violets and forget-me-nots, while over by the fence bloomed beautiful pink wild roses.

All day long the flowers were so happy. They danced in the breeze and basked in the sunshine, but the happiest time of all was when the children came. Then the blossoms all played hide-and-seek, dodging first behind this grass-blade, and then behind that, ready

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to spring up again right in the children's hands.

But one morning when the flowers awoke they heard strange news which made them dance longer and more merrily than ever, for there was to be a flower festival, and the most beautiful blossoms in Tifton Meadow were to be chosen to make the town gorgeous. Oh, how they all danced and chattered! The daisies nodded and bowed and seemed to say: "Oh, yes, we'll be chosen. Our yellow-and-white blossoms will be just the thing."

The modest little violets and forget-me-nots did not say a word, but hid away in the grass. They wanted to go but were far too shy to make their wants a public thing. The wild rose blushed a deeper pink as she assured herself that pink flowers were always wanted. But of all the flowers the thistles made the

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most noise. They even clapped their stems together when they saw the children coming. They felt sure that their blossoms would be selected for the grand festival.

As the children came into the meadow the flowers saw that they were led by a beautiful woman. Her long, soft dress swept the grass carpet and she carried a snowy-white parasol, but as it was shady under the trees she had it closed, and as she came among them, she touched with the point of the parasol the flowers she wanted the children to pick.

"Do not take these," she said, pointing to the wild rose. "The thorns will tear your fingers.

"And do not take these," touching the violets and forget-me-nots with her white parasol. "It would take hundreds and hundreds to make enough. They are so small. And the daisies are too bold-looking, but

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these are just what we need. The thistle will make a beautiful feathery show." Then she turned away and said, "But come, children, we will first sit under the willows and eat our lunch, for you must be tired."

So the children followed the lady, who the flowers all thought must be the queen of the fairies, down to the brook. The thistles felt proud and haughty, and, instead of feeling sorry for the violets, daisies, forget-me-nots and wild roses, they longed to make them even more miserable than they were.

"Aha," they said to the wild rose, "pink is a beautiful color, but thorns will tear your fingers."

Then to the wee violets and forget-me-nots they said, "You are so small. It would take a hundred of you to make one of us. Why don't you grow?"

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“ Bold daisies, I guess you'll not brag over your yellow centers now. Why didn't all of you have purple heads like ours? We'll see the festival and you? Why, you'll die in Tifton Meadow. Ha! Ha! Ha! ——”

But the thistles' laugh was broken, for just then a step was heard in Tifton Meadow and every one knew that it was Mother Nature. She looked very sad indeed as she said, “ Oh, my children, my children, my little flower children! Why are your heads all drooping?” Then turning to the thistles, she said, “ Why do you speak so boastfully? See how your sides are swollen with pride, and see what pride has caused to break out all over you.” And when the thistles looked down, all over their sides, which were swollen to twice their natural size, were sharp thorns!

Then the beautiful woman and her charges

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came back and the children rushed over to pick the thistles, but no sooner had they touched them than they cried out with pain, for the thorns had pierced their fingers. Then the woman said, "How strange that I did not notice those thorns before! Here, pick the violets, the forget-me-nots, the daisies and the roses. They are more beautiful, anyway, and the rose-thorns will not hurt you as much as those of the thistle."

So all the flowers in Tifton Meadow were taken except the thistles, which the children have been afraid to touch ever since that day.





XVII WHY THE BUZZARD'S NECK AND HEAD ARE BARE

NO wonder all Fairy-Land was sorrowful, for never before had so much trouble come to them. Heretofore they had been able to live unmolested, for the mountain on one side shut off the earth people and the sea on the other side made their kingdom beauti-

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ful as well as secluded. But now some one had come into their very midst and there seemed no way to rid themselves of this trouble. It would not have been so bad had this intruder been like some of the earth people the fairies had seen, good and clean and kind, but he was none of these things. He was even more wicked than the fairies had thought any of the earth people could be.

Sometimes as he looked for coal over the side of the mountain he became so angry because he could not find it in as great a quantity as he desired, that he struck with all his force on the rocks and often the fairies had to scamper away to keep from being killed by his blows. Of course he could not see them, and he did not know when he cut the great stalks of goldenrod that he was destroying the home of many brownies.

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The fairies felt that they could pardon all these things, but they could not overlook the fact that he was so uncleanly. Why, he went about with his hair all disheveled and he never thought of wearing a hat. His collar, too, was always missing, his clothes were dirty and his hands and face looked as if they had never been washed.

It is true that he never saw the fairies, and he never knew that they lived all about him, but the fairies saw him, and oh, how they disliked this old man of the mountain!

At last it became almost unbearable, so a special day was set on which the fairies were to have a meeting and bring a petition to their queen to rid them of this monster.

But when the queen of the fairies read this petition, she shook her head and said, "I cannot do this for you, my people, for the law of

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the fairies is that they will do no harm to any one unless harm is first done to them. This old man has not really harmed us. It is true that he is very annoying, but we cannot trouble him, for thus our law reads." So all the little pixies, all the little brownies, all the little elves, and all the little fairies went back to their homes very sorrowful, indeed, and the days went by but matters grew worse instead of better.

The old man of the mountain grew crosser, lazier, and more unkind every day. He never had a kind word for any creature and he soon grew so lazy that he would not work but went about over the mountain picking up the unfortunate fowls and animals which had been overtaken and killed by storms or by the aim of some sportsman. He was cruel, too, and often killed the helpless little birds

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and small animals in order to make a meal.

So the summer passed and the autumn grains ripened and were gathered in, and when the winter snows began to fall the old man could not find food enough to eat, so every night the fairies prepared a dainty basket and sent it to the door of his hut by a pixie, who quickly set the basket down and ran away, and every morning the old man put out his hand and took it in without a word of thanks or, as far as any one knew, without a thought of the source of this charity.

One night the pixie, whose duty it was to carry the basket, overslept and the sun was just showing itself above the eastern horizon when he approached the door of the hut. No sooner had he set the basket down and turned to go away than the old man opened

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the door. Before the pixie could draw his breath he was snatched up by the tail of his coat and held suspended in the air. The old man was quivering with rage as he said :

“Now I have you! So you thought you would steal some of the food in my basket, did you? Well, you won't. I thought all the time that some one was stealing from me and now I have you.” Then he shook the little pixie so hard that his teeth chattered, and there is no telling what he would have done had not the queen of the fairies appeared just at that time. Loosening the pixie from his grasp she said :

“Shame on you! Every night this little pixie has faithfully left at your door food for the day. Shame on you to treat your benefactor so cruelly! Henceforth you shall search for your food among the dead bodies

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of the forest and, as you do not treat others as you wish to be treated, you shall no longer live like a man, but shall be a fowl of the air and men shall call you by a loathsome name, for you shall be known as a buzzard."

Then the arms of the old man became wings and his legs shortened, while his dirty clothes changed into black feathers, and as he flew away, looking for his food over the mountain, it could be seen that his whole body, save his head and neck, was covered with coarse feathers, for as he had never worn a hat or a collar he wore none now.





XVIII WHY THE FROG WEARS A GREEN VEST

ONCE upon a time there was a little brownie who would always run away from home. I do not know why, I am sure, for his home was one of the most beautiful spots in Fairy-Land. There were fairy swings,

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joggling-boards as light and supple as a fairy hand could make them, fairy books, and wonders of every kind, but this queer little brownie did not love his home. He liked the mud in the pond where the earth children played far better, and so every morning he ran away to the marsh lands.

Of course the fairy queen always sent a messenger out to look for him, but often she could not find the truant, for he would wrap the swamp grass all around his body and lie low in the weeds of the marsh until she had given up all hope of finding him.

One day this naughty little brownie ran away very early in the morning. He had planned to spend such a happy day in the weeds and mud, playing leap-frog with the bugs and insects which lived among the marsh weeds. It was the day of all days

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when he should have been at home, for it was the fairy queen's birthday. Still, he ran away and was having the finest time in the world when he heard the silver bells of the fairy messenger ringing. "Now," said the naughty little brownie to himself, "it will never do for that stupid messenger to find me, for if she does, I shall never be allowed to come here again." So he slipped under the tall grass and wound the green weeds around his body, then spattered the brown mud of the marsh all over himself, and lay very still and waited.

Nearer and nearer came the messenger. She was now so close that her breath could be felt, but the brownie did not stir. She called him in her sweetest manner, but he only croaked out hoarsely, "Not here—not here—not here!" and jumping from the bank into

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the water, he spattered the mud all over the fairy messenger and was lost from view.

The little fairy wondered what queer creature it was that had startled her so, but as she could not find the brownie, she went back to Fairy-Land sad at heart. The queen was sad, too, for she loved the brownie very dearly and he had completely spoiled her birthday and it is a terrible thing, you know, for any one to make a fairy queen sad on her birthday.

The messenger returned with her pretty frock ruined and the sad news that she had not been able to find the truant, that the only living thing she had seen was a queer creature which croaked to her hoarsely when she called the brownie, and bespattered her with mud as he dived beneath the water.

When the fairy queen heard this she said, "I cannot celebrate my birthday while the

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brownie cannot be found. We will all go out and search for him."

So all Fairy-Land started out. They looked through daisy-fields, they searched through woods and over mountains, and at last they came to the pond where the brownie was resting in the grass. When he saw them coming he took fresh green weeds and wrapped himself carefully in them, then he spattered his back and sides with mud as before. The queen with all her attendants came close to the bank and called his name very loudly.

"Not here—not here—not here!" called back the brownie, and his voice was hoarse and gruff, for he had been playing in the mud and water a long time.

Now when the fairy queen heard the voice, she knew at once that it was the brownie, so she searched carefully among the weeds until she

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found him. Then when she looked on him and thought how he had tried to deceive her and had spoiled her birthday, she ordered her attendants to drag him out of the marsh by his legs.

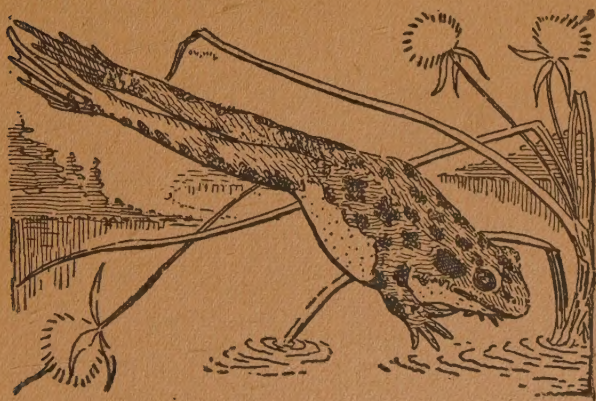
Now this naughty little brownie fought and struggled so hard that his legs were stretched to twice their former length, and he begged the queen not to take him back to Fairy-Land but to let him stay in the marsh.

The fairy queen looked very sad indeed as she said, " You cannot be allowed to go again into Fairy-Land, and you shall have your request granted. As you have tried to deceive me by making for yourself a coat of the marsh weeds and bespattering this with mud, you shall henceforth wear a green vest and a coat spotted with brown. Your arms shall be legs, while your legs shall remain long, as they now are. You need have no

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fear that I will send my messenger for you again, for you are no longer a brownie, but a common frog wearing a green vest, and all your life you shall call in a hoarse, gruff voice, 'Not here—not here—not here!'

Since that day all brownies have been contented to live in Fairy-Land, and the frog has worn a green vest. We can still hear his voice as he calls to us from the marsh, "Not here—not here—not here!"









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